Pandemic Preparedness Coordinating Committee Draft Minutes May 24, 2006

Present: Betsey Andrews Parker, Christen Bergeron, Mary Cook, Mary Ann Cooney, Stephen Crawford, Robert Gougelet, Jennifer Harper, Ransey Hill, Denise Horrocks, Ralph Littlefield, John Martin, Jose Montero, Greg Moore, William Oleksak, Lloyd Peterson, Joseph Simeone, Nancy Smith, Commissioner John Stephen, Commissioner Stephen Taylor, Neil Twitchell, Nicola Whitley, Deborah Yeager. Recording Secretary Jennifer Ritchings.

1. Opening and Purpose

Commissioner John Stephen opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He noted that this was a very important meeting and some of the key items that the Committee needed to consider were approving the proposed changes to the regions, reviewing and approving plans that were already submitted, discussing benchmarks, performance metrics, and technical assistance, and looking at next steps. Commissioner Stephen pointed out that, since the last meeting, there has been a lot of activity within the local areas and regions and at the Department. He noted that the Avian planning website was recently reviewed by the Federal government who said that it was a very innovative and helpful site. Commissioner Stephen noted that Ransey Hill had put a lot of work into creating that website and he hoped it would continue to be innovative.

2. Changes to All Hazard Regions

Commissioner Stephen reminded the Committee that the goal is to assure that all cities and towns in NH are covered by a system that will assure comprehensive public health protection. He said that, in order to achieve that goal, it is essential to plan from the ground up by engaging local partners. Initially, there were 24 All Hazard Regions. However, since the Committee approved the regions, local partners have been pooling resources in some areas. With the changes, there are now 19 All Hazard Regions.

Joseph Simeone asked if the All Hazard Regions were practical and whether or not they aligned with operational needs in case of a real emergency. Commissioner Stephen replied that the All Hazard Regions encourage the current Public Health Networks to become more involved in regional planning. He noted that Public Health is different than Safety and, during the discussion period prior to the proposal, the decision was made to align the regions with traditional public health response. Mary Ann Cooney replied that, during the discussions at the local level, there has been a lot of discussions around those types of issues, such as mutual aid, hazmat, EMS. She said that, while Public Health needs and response can be different than safety needs and response, it joins well. She said it was definitely one of the factors that influences communities in choosing to join resources.

Commissioner Stephen said that the lines may not be perfect with emergency response maps, but it was a conscious decision. They did not want to go county by county because the towns and communities had not been planning that way. They

decided to assure that the regions were aligned well with the planning areas that were already in place with the Public Health Networks.

Neil Twitchell noted that there was a good overall alignment with major population centers. He said that it is the smaller, outlying towns, usually with smaller populations, that may move between regions. Jennifer Harper noted that the regions took into account things like the Smallpox Planning that had already taken place. She said that the communities were taking a look at what makes sense when it comes to response planning. Commissioner Stephen agreed and said that it was important to note that the changes to regions came from the local level. It was local planners, like Laconia and Meredith, choosing to come together in ways that make sense. However, he said that it was also important to bring those changes back to the committee for approval and a formal vote.

ACTION: Ralph Littlefield made the motion to approve the All Hazard Planning Regions as presented on the map dated May 24, 2006. Rob Gougelet seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stephen noted that it was his intention to be flexible based on the needs of the cities and towns, but any changes would be brought to the Committee for approval.

3. **Benchmarks**

Commissioner Stephen reviewed some of the benchmarks that the All Hazard Regions will need to meet. These included:

- -Each city or town shall have a designated *government official* that shall sign the MOU, agreeing to its terms
- -75% of funding at G & C approval; 25% will be held in escrow until submission of the preliminary plan
- -Each city or town within an AHR shall be actively involved in the planning efforts
- -At least one community-wide forum prior to the release of the plan in each of the AHR's cities and towns.
- -A tabletop exercise that shall be conducted within 6 months of receipt of the funds.

Partners to engage include:

- -Elected and appointed municipal officials
- -Emergency medical services
- -Police
- -Hospitals
- -Community health centers
- -Primary care providers
- -Home care providers
- -Local Emergency Management Officers
- -School officials
- -Human/social service providers
- -Public health network partners
- -Behavioral health providers

4. Proposals

Commissioner Stephen noted that the Committee needs to approve the proposal and budget for each of the All Hazard Regions. He said that, so far, nine AHRs have submitted proposals and budgets. He said that it is important for the Committee to look at how each region proposes to spend the planning funds and also for the Committee to see how they plan on achieving the benchmarks. Once the Committee has reviewed and approved the proposals and budgets, the Department will work on making sure that the MOUs are signed and the Fiscal agent is appointed in each region.

Neil Twitchell reviewed the proposals that have been received so far. He said that nine regions have submitted proposals and budgets. Of those nine regions, two included all signed MOUs. Of the remaining, six have at least some of the MOUs signed. The floods impacted this process last week.

Some of the overarching issues related to the proposals included:

- -Reinforce local self-assessment is the first step
- -Need for state to coordinate education materials development to avoid duplication
- -Reinforce that agencies other than the lead can take responsibility for certain tasks
- -Encourage reaching out to all potential partners identified in planning guidance

Some of the overarching issues related to the budgets included:

- -Clarify funds set aside for tabletop
- -Coordinate materials purchase to ensure bulk pricing
- -Ensure mileage funds are available to planning partners upon request
- -Indirect charges limited to 10% of direct costs, not entire amount of funds available

Ralph Littlefield asked if there were any conditions around the proposals. Commissioner Stephen replied that they had suggestions, but they were not set yet. That was one of the tasks of the Committee.

Neil Twitchell distributed copies of the summary sheet of the proposals. He noted that the regions were not identified, but were numbered. He said that the reason for doing this was so that the Committee would review the proposals collectively, not individually. Mary Ann Cooney said that the Committee should be looking at them from the perspective of process and parameters. The Governor & Council would look at the closer approval at that level. Commissioner Stephen said that he felt it was important to show the G&C that the PPCC reviewed and approved the proposals and budget. He noted that, with BT funding in the past, there had been some questions and concerns about what the funds were used for. He said that this approval process was important to show that the Committee was comfortable with the proposals and budgets.

Bill Oleksak asked if there were certain items that would not be allowed in the budget and certain items that were required. Neil Twitchell said that the budget guidance

included broad topics of what should be included. The only item that the review committee questioned was that one region was requesting purchase of a laptop. Bill Oleksak asked if there was an idea of what might be allowed in the next round of funding. Mary Ann Cooney replied that they did not yet have guidance, but it will be one of the roles of the PPCC to decide the parameters based on the guidance.

Region #1

Key points of the Region #1 proposal

- -identified partners
- -needs to spread responsibility beyond just coordinating committee
- -educational materials requested
- -good job on communication plan
- -will award subcontract for tabletop exercise

Neil Twitchell said that one question from the proposal was that the Region was requesting to award an additional \$1300 to each of the towns with a POD. He said that the reviewers wondered how appropriate it was to award money just to the POD towns when they should be a regional resource instead of community-specific. Dr. Gougelet said that the POD was definitely a regional resource and it's important to look at what would happen if a POD went down due to circumstances like a flood – would those resources be lost or would another POD within the region be able to take over? Dr. Gougelet pointed out that there are 10-14 trailers available with capabilities like a POD. However, for planning purposes, it is important to identify and support POD staffing, accessibility, and community education. He said that it is worth investing the funds in PODs.

Nancy Smith asked about the plan for coordinating the development of educational materials at the state level. Neil Twitchell said that the first step was to better define the type of materials that the Regions are requesting. He said that will allow the state to see what is already available that could be customized. Commissioner Stephen said that the educational materials must be consistent with those delivered at the state level. Jose Montero recounted an experience where he reviewed materials that were developed by a Region that actually contained inaccurate information. He said that his experience showed the need for all educational materials to be part of an overarching communications plan. Neil Twitchell pointed out that it was not just a matter of having materials that are inaccurate, but also messages that are inconsistent. For example, one Region may develop materials suggesting that residents keep supplies for seven days while another might develop materials asking for fourteen days. It is important that the messages are the same for all. Jose Montero said that is the role that the state will play. The state will set the message. Mary Ann Cooney said that there was room for unique educational materials in the Region. These materials might be directions to a POD, which would be different for each Region. However, the main messaging would need to be the same across all Regions.

Dr. Gougelet said that, on the issue of the POD, it is also important for the local communities to take ownership of the PODs, but to recognize that they are a regional resource. Hosting a POD does deserve recognition and support. Jose Montero suggested keeping the funds at the regional level because if they are sent to the towns that have the PODs the funds would become part of their town budget and could not be moved if

needed. Jennifer Harper said that it was a good idea to designate the funds for PODs, but to keep funding at the Regional level.

Betsy Andrews Parker said that, from her perspective as a representative working on the ground, the Region may need to use the funds as an incentive to get the towns to participate as POD sites. She said that the dollars may be an incentive for participation. Commissioner Stephen said that he did want to offer the Regions flexibility.

ACTION: Dr. Gougelet made the motion to accept the Region 1 proposal. Commissioner Stephen Taylor seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #2

Key points in the Region 2 proposal

- -Linked quarantine sites with POD sites may not be the same, though
- -aggressive timeline for planning
- -engagement of partners
- -subcontract to one town for administrative support
- -\$6500 for tabletop exercise

ACTION: Dr. Gougelet made the motion to accept the Region 2 proposal. Denise Horrocks seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #5

Key points in the Region 5 proposal

- -needs to encourage others to take on action items
- -not a lot of experience with this region so need clarification of acronyms for partners
- -some budget questions
 - -does not have a PHN
 - -does not include \$ for subcontracts or consultants
- -50% of funds for educational materials
 - -seems like a lot for the size of the region
- -no funds for tabletop exercise

Commissioner Stephen said that, based on the details of the proposal and the number of questions, he did not feel that there is enough information to approve this proposal. He said that it is important to get the process right.

ACTION: Commissioner Stephen Taylor made the motion to lay the proposal from Region 5 on the table.

Region #7

Key points in the Region 7 proposal

- -needs to have the local assessment earlier on the timeline and make it regional not town focused
- -very strong plan to engage municipalities
- -educational materials 10,000 pieces
- -\$1,000 for website development
- -\$ set aside for consultants
- -needs to allot funds for a tabletop exercise

Commissioner Stephen noted that the plan for a website was innovative, but it would need to link to the DHHS website. He said he had a concern regarding the money for marketing. Neil Twitchell noted that the proposal said that the money for marketing would go toward holding two community forums in each town.

ACTION: Dr. Gougelet made the motion to accept the Region 7 proposal. Deb Yeager seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #10

Key points in the Region 10 proposal

- -strong timeline
- -salary and benefit request needs to be clarified to make sure it is not supplanting other funds
- -education materials 25,000 pieces
- -subcontract to local chamber of commerce for business forum
- -stipend to each municipality with a detailed set of activities that the municipality needs to complete in order to receive the stipend

Neil Twitchell said that the Region's proposal for the detailed list of activities associated with the municipal stipend could act as a model for other regions considering a municipal stipend.

ACTION: Dr. Gougelet made the motion to accept the Region 10 proposal. Deb Yeager seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #11

Key points in the Region 11 proposal

- -aggressive timeline
- -good list of partners
- -need to clarify that request for salary and benefits does not supplant other funds
- -includes funds for tabletop exercise
- -stipend of \$1,000 to communities

ACTION: Commissioner Stephen Taylor made the motion to accept the Region 11 proposal. Dr. Gougelet seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #14

Key points in the Region 14 proposal

- -NIMS training included
- -aggressive regional plan timeline
- -\$21,000 subcontract to conduct inventory and self-assessment process
- -educational material 20,000 pieces

Dr. Gougelet asked what the Region's total budget was. Neil Twitchell said it was around \$29,000. Dr. Gougelet said that he was concerned that the Region was allotting such a large percentage of the total budget to the subcontract for inventory. He said that it seems like a lot of money for something that is only a small part of what needs to be done and is something that can be accomplished easily. Neil Twitchell said that they were concerned about the limited scope for the subcontract. He noted that this region did

not have a PHN in place to coordinate and it will need a high level of support. He said that, at the very least, they will need to expand the scope of the subcontract. Commissioner Stephen said that he agreed with Dr. Gougelet regarding the idea that an inventory seemed to be only a small part of what needs to be done, especially since there may be some redundancy with some of the activities of BEM. He said that he felt there needed to be more information on the scope of the subcontract.

ACTION: Commissioner Stephen Taylor made the motion to lay the Region 14 proposal on the table.

Region #15

Key points in the Region 15 proposal

- -major tasks assigned mostly to coordinating committee
- -needs task list and deliverables for proposed consultant
- -educational materials 70,000 pieces (large population)
- -stipend \$2,450 to municipalities

Mary Ann Cooney noted that there needed to be a clarification that the consultant tasks are aligned with benchmarks. Jennifer Harper said that the proposal would be fine if the tasks were clearly aligned. Commissioner Stephen said that he did not want to micromanage.

ACTION: Commissioner Stephen Taylor made the motion to accept the Region 15 proposal. Bill Oleksak seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Region #16

Key points in the Region 16 proposal

- -major tasks need to be distributed beyond coordinating committee
- -timeline needs clarification
- -need to clarify pre-existing work versus pandemic specific
- -90% of total funding for a consultant
 - -this would make this a pass through contract the consultant would be responsible for all the costs of the contract

Jose Montero asked if this meant they would pay administrative costs twice, once for the Fiscal agent and once for the consultant. Neil Twitchell said that the fiscal agent would use 10% for administrative costs. Dr. Gougelet said that he was concerned that this would diffuse the funds too much. He said that it is important to have the communities engaged directly in the process to take ownership of the planning. He said that he did not think that would happen with a pass through contract. Jose Montero said that, in his experience, when money is given to a consultant to write a plan the finished plan just sits on a shelf because the community does not have buy-in. Commissioner Stephen said that he would not want just the consultant writing the plan. He said that he would not want to micro-manage, but just having a consultant do the work may not have the outcomes that are desired. He noted that there is the possibility that they will be able to ask representatives from the regions to speak to the PPCC regarding the proposals should the PPCC ask to have them at the next meeting.

ACTION: Bill Oleksak made the motion to lay the Region 16 proposal on the table.

5. <u>Items for Discussion</u>

Commissioner Stephen said that some of the Regions expressed concern that six months was not enough time to accomplish the tasks. Commissioner Stephen said that his intention was to have communities take the process seriously in order to complete the tasks in a timely manner. However, he said that it was important for the Committee to address the concerns of the Regions. Commissioner Stephen said that one compromise, suggested by Lloyd Peterson, would be to allow a waiver for extenuating circumstances.

Greg Moore noted that this is just the first round of funding. He said that it would be important to get a lot done in a short amount of time to be able to demonstrate those accomplishments for the second round of funding. The second round will be competitive so the more aggressive the state is now the more likely it is to receive more funding later. Commissioner Stephen noted that the six-month clock would start ticking once the Region received its funds.

Dr. Gougelet said that he agreed with the idea of granting a waiver for due cause. However, since Regions know what is coming, they could be planning now. Deb Yeager said that she also like the idea of a waiver because there are sometimes events, like a flood, that are unexpected. Greg Moore said that the waiver should have a timeframe and that not all waivers will be granted.

Betsy Andrews Parker noted that there was concerns about being up against the holidays and the ability for municipalities to schedule facilities. She asked if it would be possible to schedule a meeting for January, but still meet the requirement by including the agenda as proof that it had been scheduled.

Commissioner Stephen said that the waiver would need to be for extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the Region and would need to be date specific. Commissioner Taylor noted that the term waiver generally meant that a requirement would not need to be met at all. He said that a better term would be deferral or extension. Commissioner Stephen agreed that extensions would only be given for extenuating circumstances.

Bill Oleksak said that he would not want to give communities an excuse not to plan. He said that mother nature does not give waivers. Many communities already have plans that they could tweak. He said that it is important for communities to be planning now. Commissioner Stephen agreed that there is a threat and they don't know when it will strike. That is why it is important to be ready now.

Mary Ann Cooney noted that 25% of the funding is being held back until completion. She said that it is the incentive to complete within the 180-day timeframe. Neil Twitchell noted that there is a concern in some areas that the communities are reluctant to sign the MOU because they do not feel that they can complete the tasks in the time allotted. Ralph Littlefield said that he is currently working with towns dealing with the floods and they very much wish they had plans in place now. He said that he feels the citizens expect that their communities will be prepared and it's important to meet that expectation.

Commissioner Stephen said that the Committee could look at extenuating circumstances, but, at this point, it is left open. He noted that the six-month timeframe may even be in the MOU that the Governor will sign with Secretary Leavitt. Commissioner Stephen noted that the consequence for a community not signing the

MOU is that the Region would not get its funds. He said that they would need to come back to the PPCC for guidance and they would work with the communities to get the MOU signed. He said that, at this point, he does not see any feelings of disengagement in the community. Mary Ann Cooney said that there will be Technical Assistance available to help communities.

Commissioner Stephen said that there was also a question around the educational materials. He said that it is important that there be a clear and consistent message in all educational materials. He said that educational materials developed at the local level would need to be reviewed and approved by the Division of Public Health Services (DPHS).

ACTION: Ralph Littlefield made the motion that all educational materials developed at the local level should be consistent and approved by DPHS. Commissioner Stephen Taylor seconded the motion. Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Ralph Littlefield pointed out that it was important that the materials reflect a sixth grade reading level, and take into consideration multi-lingual for non-English speakers and print size for the elderly. Jose Montero said that the communications plan will offer guidance in those areas. Commissioner Stephen noted that Governor Lynch has also emphasized the importance of a communications plan.

Mary Ann Cooney noted that the PPCC set aside funds for evaluation. She said that they are finalizing the scope of services for the consultant to include coordinating and evaluating regional planning, including benchmarks. She said that the regional planning is a huge task and needs to have that one person dedicated to overseeing the process. She said that the RFP will be ready within the month. The final decision will be done by September 1. Commissioner Stephen said that the consultant will update the Committee on a regular basis. Mary Ann Cooney said that having a consultant will be important because that individual will be able to have that intimate knowledge and overarching view that may be missed otherwise. She said that there may be the opportunity to include funding in the next round for the consultant. Commissioner Stephen asked if there were any available Homeland Security funds. Mary Ann Cooney responded that the BT committee was looking into it.

Greg Moore pointed out that the website www.avianflu.nh.gov currently included comprehensive information from a public health standpoint. However, the intention of that website is to be an all-agency website with information from other state agencies. He said that they hope to make it a unified, statewide avian flu website.

Joseph Simeone noted that it is important for local, regional, and state planners to look at their expectations and needs when it comes to calling on the National Guard. He said that there are certain areas where the National Guard is very comfortable, such as transportation and traffic control. These are areas they have done and have drilled. He said that planners need to let the National Guard know what role they are expected to play, especially if it goes beyond what they may be used to. He said that he would encourage planners to be thinking of that and to include a National Guard representative

in any planning activities. Mary Ann Cooney said that it is definitely a question that they are looking at – when and if it is appropriate to call on the National Guard.

Commissioner Stephen noted that recent legislation establishes the position of Director of Homeland Security, He said that addressing questions like that would be part of the Director of Homeland Security's duties. He would ask what do you want and need the National Guard to do. Commissioner Stephen said that is the role he sees the Homeland Security Director playing – bringing all the players together to answer those questions. Commissioner Stephen said that the important thing right now is to get the communities together to begin planning and then begin asking those questions in more detail. Dr. Gougelet said that this is a critical part of surge planning. Once surge planning is brought to a level of detail, the question of the National Guard can be asked.

Commissioner Stephen noted that there is a role in every Region for the National Guard. He said that the MOU outlines the expectations for planning, including partners. He said that communities will be starting the process and the consultant will be able to drive that process and ensure that partners, like the National Guard, are involved in the process.

Commissioner Stephen asked for the Committee's preference on meetings going forward. He said that there would be more proposals coming in and the Committee would need to approve them.

Joseph Simeone said that he trusted the expertise of the Department and felt that if the Department reviewed the proposals and offered an electronic recommendation, he would feel comfortable voting electronically. Commissioner Stephen said that the Department could work with the Regions and then send out a synopsis of the proposals with recommendation to the Committee members. There would be another meeting of the group in a couple of months. Mary Ann Cooney also suggested holding a conference call if needed.

Commissioner Stephen Taylor suggested that the information be sent electronically and the Committee members respond only if they have a question or would vote no. If they do not respond by a certain date, it could be interpreted as an approval.

Commissioner Stephen said that the next meeting of the PPCC would include an overview of the planning process to that date.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Ritchings, Recording Secretary.